

## Elite Opponents

# Variant Blackspawn Stalkers

*Creature Incarnations*  
By Robert Wiese



*Monster Manual IV* came out recently, and it has some interesting new creatures. Chief among these are the spawn of Tiamat, evil creatures that are either monstrous humanoids or magical beasts but imbued with some of Tiamat's own power. Thus, they combine some draconic aspect with another type of creature. The spawn of Tiamat have spread throughout the planes and bred on their own, and so variants are bound to appear as the creatures undertake transformations, become undead, or are forced into becoming the subjects of magical experimentation.



One type of spawn of Tiamat is the blackspawn stalker, a large creature that looks like a cross between a spider and a black dragon, and variants on this theme are what this month's column is all about. As magical beasts, they can work with a very large number of templates. Of course, a chimeric one of these creatures would be way cool, but unfortunately that template is not applicable. I trust you'll be inspired enough by the selection that we did find (via Rent-a-Scout) that you will explore your own variants for your game.

## d20 Modern: Half-Fiend Spawn of Tiamat

Given that the spawn of Tiamat have some of her essence and evil power within them, they already have a fiendish nature without the specific template. If they are great servants as they are, how much better are they when you breed them with fiends? Having a fiend as a parent infuses the spawn with even more evil, and since Tiamat lives in Hell anyway she is used to dealing with fiends. The blackspawn stalker here has been modified with the half-fiend template from the *d20 Menace Manual*.

A half-fiend blackspawn stalker has more tones of black than blue or gray in its hide, and it possesses large batlike wings on its back that are covered in fine scales. Overall, the creature's body is scaliier than one normally sees in a blackspawn stalker. Its fiendish blood lends its visage more hideousness than that of its less fiendish cousin, and its cruel streak is stronger.

**Blackspawn Stalker CR 12**

**CE** **Largeoutsider** (dragonblood)

**Action Points** 0

**Init** -1; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +14, Spot +14

**Languages** Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

**Defense** 26, touch 11, **flat-footed** 24

(-1 size, +2 Dex, +15 natural)

**hp** 115 (10 **HD**); **DR** 10/silver

**Mas** 21

**Immune** acid

**Resist** concussion/sonic 10

**Fort** +13, **Ref** +11, **Will** +4

**Speed** 40 ft. (8 **squares**), climb 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

**Melee** bite +17 (2d6+8/19-20 plus 1d6 acid) and 2 claws +15 (1d6+4) and 2 tail slaps +15 each (1d8+4) or

**Ranged** 2 webs +11 ranged touch each (entangle)

**Fighting Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

**Base Atk** +10; **Grp** +22

**Atk Options** Power Attack, deadly charge 4d6+12

**Special Actions** spit acid

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th):

3/day -- *daze*, *mage hand*

1/day -- *blur*, *cause fear*, *change self*

**Abilities** **Str** 27, **Dex** 19, **Con** 23, **Int** 9, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 13

**SQ** Tiamat's blessing (acid)

**Feats** Improved Critical (bite), Multiattack, Power Attack, Track

**Skills** Climb +29, Hide +6, Jump +25, Listen +14, Move Silently +10, Spot +14, Survival +14, Tumble +5

\*A blackspawn stalker can always take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened

**Rep** +0

**Deadly Charge (Ex)** A half-fiend blackspawn stalker typically begins a battle by charging at an opponent. In addition to the normal benefits and hazards of a charge, this allows the half-fiend blackspawn stalker to make a single gore attack with a +15 attack bonus that deals 4d6+9 points of damage.

**Spit Acid (Su)** A half-fiend blackspawn stalker can spit its acidic saliva up to 60 feet as a standard action. This is a ranged touch attack with no range increment that deals 5d6 points of acid damage. This acid damage increases by 1d6 for every 2 additional HD.

**Tiamat's Blessing (Acid) (Su)** All spawn of Tiamat within 5 feet of a half-fiend blackspawn stalker gain immunity to acid.

**Web (Ex)** A half-fiend blackspawn stalker can throw two webs per round, up to eight times per day. Each of these attacks is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and is effective against targets up to Huge size. The web anchors the target in place, allowing no movement. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing gain a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. An entangled creature can escape with a DC 21 Escape Artist check or burst it with a DC 21 Strength check. The check DCs are Constitution-based. The web has 12 hit points, hardness 0, and takes double damage from fire.

A half-fiend blackspawn stalker can create sheets of sticky webbing up to 20 feet square. It usually positions these sheets to snare flying creatures but can also try to trap prey on the ground. Approaching creatures must succeed on a DC 20 Spot check to notice a web; otherwise they stumble into it and become trapped as though by a successful web attack. Each 5-foot section of webbing has 12 hit points and damage reduction 5/--. A half-

fiend blackspawn stalker can move across its own sheet web at its climb speed and can determine the exact location of any creature touching the web.

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## Stony Woodling Blackspawn Stalker

This creature comes from using two templates that probably should not work together, but according to the rules they do. The woodling template from *Monster Manual III* grants a creature plant traits and a plantlike exterior without changing its type. The mineral warrior template in *Underdark* is an acquired template that creates creatures made of living stone. They get that way because of experimentation by wizards, but then can breed true. The origin of this creature is a mystery, but probably someone created woodling blackspawn stalkers to attack woody communities, and some drow sorcerer got his hands on one of them and modified it forcefully for use in the Underdark. Since the blackspawn stalker is part spider, some drow think they are servants of Lolth sent to aid them against the surface world.

A stony woodling blackspawn stalker looks like a blackspawn stalker with woody skin and brushy hair, except that the woody skin has a stony look to it, like petrified wood. It otherwise acts the same as a standard blackspawn stalker, setting traps with its webs and charging foes to make its deadly charge attack. It relies on its nearly impenetrable skin to protect it from the dangers of charging.

### Stony Woodling Blackspawn Stalker CR 12

CE Large magical beast (dragonblood, earth)

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent, tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +2

**Languages** Draconic

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**AC** 35, touch 11, flat-footed 34

(-1 size, +2 Dex, +24 natural)

**hp** 125 (10 HD); **DR** 5/slashing and 8/adamantine

**Immune** acid, poison, magic sleep effects, mind-affecting spells and effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, morale effects), paralysis, polymorph, stunning, critical hits

**Fort** +14, **Ref** +9, **Will** +3

**Weakness** vulnerability to fire

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**Speed** 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 40 ft., burrow 20 ft.

**Melee** bite +16 (2d6+7/19-20 plus 1d6 acid) and

2 tail slaps +14 each (1d8+3) or

slam +16 (1d8+7) or

**Ranged** 2 webs +11 ranged touch each (entangle)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with tail slap)

**Base Atk** +10; **Grp** +21

**Atk Options** Power Attack, deadly charge 4d6+10, earth strike

**Special Actions** spit acid

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th):

3/day -- *Speak with plants*

1/day -- *entangle* (DC 10), *summon nature's ally II*, *summon nature's ally IV*

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**Abilities** Str 25, Dex 15, Con 25, Int 3, Wis 11, Cha 9

**SQ** Tiamat's blessing (acid)

**Feats** Improved Critical (bite), Multiattack, Power Attack, Track

**Skills** Climb +17, Hide +2 (+6 aboveground natural environments), Jump +13, Listen +2, Move Silently +2 (+6 aboveground natural environments), Spot +2, Survival +5

\*A stony woodling blackspawn stalker can always take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened

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**Deadly Charge (Ex)** A stony woodling blackspawn stalker typically begins a battle by charging at an opponent.

In addition to the normal benefits and hazards of a charge, this allows the stony woodling blackspawn stalker to make a single gore attack with a +15 attack bonus that deals 4d6+9 points of damage.

**Earth Strike (Ex)** Once per day, a stony woodling blackspawn stalker can make an exceptionally vicious attack against any foe that stands on stone or earth. The stony woodling blackspawn stalker has a +5 bonus on attack rolls and deals 10 extra points of damage.

**Spit Acid (Su)** A stony woodling blackspawn stalker can spit its acidic saliva up to 60 feet as a standard action. This is a ranged touch attack with no range increment that deals 5d6 points of acid damage. This acid damage increases by 1d6 for every 2 additional HD.

**Tiamat's Blessing (Acid) (Su)** All spawn of Tiamat within 5 feet of a stony woodling blackspawn stalker gain immunity to acid.

**Web (Ex)** A stony woodling blackspawn stalker can throw two webs per round, up to eight times per day. Each of these attacks is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and is effective against targets up to Huge size. The web anchors the target in place, allowing no movement. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing gain a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. An entangled creature can escape with a DC 22 Escape Artist check or burst it with a DC 22 Strength check. The check DCs are Constitution-based. The web has 12 hit points, hardness 0, and takes double damage from fire.

A stony woodling blackspawn stalker can create sheets of sticky webbing up to 20 feet square. It usually positions these sheets to snare flying creatures but can also try to trap prey on the ground. Approaching creatures must succeed on a DC 20 Spot check to notice a web; otherwise they stumble into it and become trapped as though by a successful web attack. Each 5-foot section of webbing has 12 hit points and damage reduction 5/--. A stony woodling blackspawn stalker can move across its own sheet web at its climb speed and can determine the exact location of any creature touching the web.

## Spiderswarm Blackspawn Stalker

Taking the spidery theme of the blackspawn stalker to an extreme results in this strange creature. The swarm-shifter template is presented in *Libris Mortis* and is quite fun for making a surprising creature with little CR cost. Just picture Imhotep from *The Mummy* turning into a cloud of dust and you'll get a good idea. If only he had turned into a swarm of scarab beetles. . . . To use the swarm-shifter template, the creature has to be undead. Making a magical beast undead is not that easy, but the mumia template from *Ghostwalk* comes to the rescue. Undoubtedly some splinter group devoted to Nerull or Lolth or even Tiamat made a blackspawn stalker into a mumia so it could continue the fight, and the patron deity gave it swarm powers.

This creature looks like a cross between a dessicated black dragon and a spider wrapped in leather and strips of cloth. Whenever it wants to, it sort of dissolves into a pile of undead spiders that scurry creepily along the ground.

This entry has two sets of statistics blocks, followed by the special qualities presented only once.

### **Blackspawn Stalker Mumia Swarm-Shifter (normal form) CR 11**

CE Large undead (dragonblood, shapechanger)

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent, tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +3, Spot +3

**Languages** Draconic

**AC** 25, touch 11, flat-footed 24  
 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +14 natural)  
**hp** 65 (10 HD); fast healing 2  
**Immune** acid; undead immunities  
**Resist** +2 turn resistance  
**Fort** +7, **Ref** +9, **Will** +4

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**Speed** 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 40 ft.  
**Melee** bite +15 (2d6+6/19-20 plus 1d6 acid plus withering touch) and  
 2 tail slaps +13 each (1d8+3 plus withering touch) or  
**Ranged** 2 webs +11 ranged touch each (entangle)  
**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with tail slap)  
**Base Atk** +10; **Grp** +20  
**Atk Options** Power Attack, deadly charge 4d6+9, withering touch  
**Special Actions** spit acid

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**Abilities** Str 23, Dex 15, Con --, Int 5, Wis 13, Cha 11

**SQ** Tiamat's blessing (acid), swarm form

**Feats** Improved Critical (bite), Multiattack, Power Attack, Track

**Skills** Climb +16, Jump +12, Listen +3, Spot +3, Survival +6

\*A blackspawn stalker mumia swarm-shifter can always take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened

### **Blackspawn Stalker Mumia Swarm-Shifter (spider swarm form) CR 11**

CE Diminutive undead (dragonblood, shapechanger, swarm)

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent, tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +3, Spot +3

**Languages** Draconic

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**AC** 30, touch 16, flat-footed 28  
 (+4 size, +2 Dex, +14 natural)  
**hp** 65 (10 HD); fast healing 2  
**Immune** acid; undead immunities, swarm immunities  
**Resist** +2 turn resistance  
**Fort** +7, **Ref** +9, **Will** +4  
**Weakness** swarm vulnerabilities

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**Speed** 20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft.  
**Melee** swarm (2d6 plus poison)  
**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.  
**Base Atk** +10; **Grp** --  
**Atk Options** distraction, poison (DC 15, 1d3 Str damage/1d3 Str damage)

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**Abilities** Str 23, Dex 15, Con --, Int 5, Wis 13, Cha 11

**SQ** hive mind, swarm traits, Tiamat's blessing (acid)

**Feats** Improved Critical (bite), Multiattack, Power Attack, Track

**Skills** Climb +16, Disguise +0 (+10 acting like normal spiders), Jump +12, Listen +3, Spot +3, Survival +6

\*A blackspawn stalker mumia swarm-shifter can always take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened

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**Deadly Charge (Ex)** A blackspawn stalker mumia swarm-shifter typically begins a battle by charging at an opponent. In addition to the normal benefits and hazards of a charge, this allows the stony woodling blackspawn stalker to make a single gore attack with a +15 attack bonus that deals 4d6+9 points of damage.

**Distraction (Ex)** Fortitude DC 15, nauseated 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Hive Mind (Ex)** All blackspawn stalker mumia swarm-shifters within 2 miles of each other are in constant communication. If one is aware of a particular danger, they all are. If one in a group is not flat-footed, none of them are. No blackspawn stalker mumia swarm-shifter in a group is considered flanked unless all of them are.

**Poison (Ex)** Swarm attack, Fortitude DC 15, initial and secondary damage 1d3 Str.

**Spit Acid (Su)** A blackspawn stalker mumia swarm-shifter can spit its acidic saliva up to 60 feet as a standard action. This is a ranged touch attack with no range increment that deals 5d6 points of acid damage. This acid damage increases by 1d6 for every 2 additional HD.

**Swarm Form (Su)** A blackspawn stalker mumia swarm-shifter in normal form can assume the form of a swarm of Diminutive undead spiders at will. Changing shape to or from swarm form is a standard action that infuses the undead with negative energy and heals 10 hit points of damage. The undead cannot change from swarm form to its normal form in an area where its body could not normally fit. When it would normally be dispersed due to damage taken, the swarm reverts to the base creature's form and is destroyed (except in the case of undead with special destruction rules). Although the use of this ability is a supernatural effect, remaining in one form or another is not supernatural, and the base creature in swarm form does not change into its normal shape in an *antimagic field*. *True seeing* and similar magic reveals both forms.

**Tiamat's Blessing (Acid) (Su)** All spawn of Tiamat within 5 feet of a blackspawn stalker mumia swarm-shifter gain immunity to acid.

**Web (Ex)** A blackspawn stalker mumia swarm-shifter can throw two webs per round, up to eight times per day. Each of these attacks is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and is effective against targets up to Huge size. The web anchors the target in place, allowing no movement. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing gain a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. An entangled creature can escape with a DC 22 Escape Artist check or burst it with a DC 22 Strength check. The check DCs are Constitution-based. The web has 12 hit points, hardness 0, and takes double damage from fire.

A blackspawn stalker mumia swarm-shifter can create sheets of sticky webbing up to 20 feet square. It usually positions these sheets to snare flying creatures but can also try to trap prey on the ground. Approaching creatures must succeed on a DC 20 Spot check to notice a web; otherwise they stumble into it and become trapped as though by a successful web attack. Each 5-foot section of webbing has 12 hit points and damage reduction 5/-. A blackspawn stalker mumia swarm-shifter can move across its own sheet web at its climb speed and can determine the exact location of any creature touching the web.

**Withering Touch (Su)** A creature hit by one of a blackspawn stalker mumia's natural attack (in normal form) must attempt a Fortitude save (DC 15) or lose 2 points of Constitution as the attacker absorbs moisture and energy from its target.

## About the Author

Robert Wiese entered the gaming hobby through the Boy Scouts and progressed from green recruit to head of the most powerful gaming fan organization in the world. He served as head of the **RPGA** Network for almost seven years, overseeing the creation of the *Living Greyhawk* and *Living Force* campaigns, among other achievements. Eventually, he returned to private life in Reno, Nevada, where he is still involved in writing, organizing conventions, and playing. He also models proteins for the Biochemistry Department of the University of Nevada, Reno and spends as much time as possible with his wife and many pets.

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